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# Young Teacher Award Citation for Randall McNeill

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## **Young Teacher Award**

### **Randall McNeill, Assistant Professor of Classics**

"Randall McNeill, Chicago-born, Harvard and Yale educated, you were perceived by the hiring committee that brought you to Lawrence as what might be termed, in the parlance of professional sports, 'the best available athlete.' You have brought the learning acquired in the east to your classrooms here in the Heartland, not to mention preppy New England sartorial attire, and your students are pleased with the wealth of knowledge you share with them. They applaud you for the 'interesting and amazing information that can't be found in [their] textbook,' even as they appreciate the Midwestern wholesomeness and friendliness which characterize your teaching style. They praise you as well for the energy and enthusiasm with which you profess and for the passion for the subject that you bring to the classical languages and Greek and Roman history. Your classes are like the Lawrence hockey games you love to watch, fast and furious, and that's why your students get caught up in all the excitement.

Your lectures are stimulating, 'engaging and entertaining'--indeed, those on Roman banquets and gladiatorial spectacles and on the idiosyncrasies of Greek trials have become legendary--and they are complemented by comprehensive study guides that you faithfully and laboriously prepare for your students. When you play the role of general and arrange your student warriors as hoplites in a phalanx, the military foundation championed by the classical Greeks and made famous by the Spartans, the students are literally acting out history. In your classes and only in your classes does Conan the Barbarian understand Greek and Latin. Whether it's a vexing grammatical challenge or an historical conundrum, your explanations are always down-to-earth and right on the mark. In fact, you are so skilled at formulating witty and memorable explanations that some students have begun collecting McNeillisms, funny and catchy but readily remembered definitions and explanations.

Freshman Studies students and advanced students alike benefit from your acknowledged mastery of the discussion method, and your speaking intensive courses are justly admired for their thoroughness. Beyond the classroom, you have transformed Classics Week into a showcase for lectures and presentations and dramatic readings by Classics students, much to their delight and to the edification and enjoyment of all, and you yourself are always willing to play a cameo role and ham it up for the benefit of the production. Perhaps most important of all, you have hammed it up as master-of-ceremonies at the annual Iron Chef competition among members of the Lawrence faculty.

For these and other attributes and accomplishments, I am pleased to recognize you today as an outstanding young teacher on the Lawrence faculty."

*Citation read by President Richard Warch at Commencement, 2003*